(b) and (c) As per available records, the detail of proposals for gauge conversion received from State Government of Gujarat in the last few years and status is as under:

SI. No.	Proposals	Action taken
1	Ahmedabad-Botad	Survey completed. Necessary action has been initiated to obtain requisite clearances.
2	Dhasa-Jetalsar	
3	Ahmedabad-Udaipur	
4	Dhasa-Veraval	No survey has been taken up.

Rise in passenger flow

736. SHRI TARIQ ANWAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is maximum rise in the passenger flow between Northern and Eastern and North-Eastern Railways;

(b) if so, the details of increase in the last six years, year-wise;

(c) whether there is any proposal for tripling the railway track in these Railways; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Separate data on inter Railway flow of number of passengers is not maintained.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The tripling of lines has been taken up on Aligarh - Ghaziabad section to meet with demand of traffic. The dedicated freight corridor oh Eastern Corridor will provide necessary capacity on this route towards Eastern and North Eastern sections.

Rail coach factory

737. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway coach building factories;

(b) the capacity of railways coach building factories;

(c) whether it is fact that railway coach factories have poor and low standard design talent; and

(d) the steps proposed to out-source design of coaches?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Presently, there are two rail coach building factories under the Ministry of Railways, namely Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai, Tamil Nadu; and Rail Coach Factory(RCF), Kapurthala, Punjab. Other than these, M/s. BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Limited) Bangalore and M/s. Jessops, Kolkata, also manufacture railway coaches.

(b) The present installed coach building capacities of the factories under the Ministry of Railways are as follows:

ICF	-	1000 coaches per annum.
RCF	-	1000 coaches per annum.

(c) No, Sir. Both ICF and RCF have their 6wn design centres, supplemented by a dedicated Research and Design facility at RDSO (Research, Design and Standards Organisation), Lucknow with personnel having expertise and knowledge in this field.

(d) Does not arise.

Loco running staff

†738. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the loco running staff has to work 12-14 hours daily and as a result of which the incidents of physical and mental tension among them are coming to light;

(b) whether the number of other essential staff is also being reduced;

(c) whether this is adversely affecting the maintenance work; and

(d) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHIR R. VELU): (a) The working hours of loco running staff have been fixed as 104 hours in a two weekly period of 14 days including preparatory and complementary work. As per extant instructions, running duty at a stretch should not ordinarily exceed 10 hours from departure of the train and overall duty should not exceed 12 hours from signing on to signing off. Only in exceptional exigencies like accidents, floods, agitation, equipment failures etc. they have to work beyond duty hours stipulated in the rules. This may in some cases, result in longer hours of duty but all efforts are made to contain the duty hours within the parameters laid down and the position is constantly monitored at all levels.

(b) to (d) No, Sir. The strength of essential safety category staff is continuously reviewed to ensure that safety and reliability of train operations is not compromised.

Electrification of Kanyakumari - Thiruvananthapuram rail line

739. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways is considering a proposal for electrification of the 78 kilometre section between Kanyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram under Southern Railway; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and sanction made, if any, in the railway budget 2007-08 for the purpose?

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.